

# The Classical Bulletin

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Vol. V

NOVEMBER, 1928

No. 2

## "Le Style Est L'homme Mème"

The relation between a man's manner of writing and his character has found a truly classic expression in Buffon's definition of style, "Le style est l'homme même."

Students of the Classics may perhaps wish to learn whether this view of style was known to the Greeks and Romans. Are there any indications in the classic authors which show what influence the individuality of a writer in antiquity was understood to have upon his style, and to what extent was Buffon's dictum valid and in force in ancient times?

A number of passages occur in ancient writers that are strikingly similar to Buffon's phrase. Plato, for example, quotes a proverb in his *Republic* iii 400 D: "As the proverb has it, a man's speech is like his character." It was perhaps this saying that found an echo in Quintilian 11, 1, 30: "There is good ground for the Greek aphorism, that as a man lives, so will he speak." Menander's line in the *Self-Tormentor* indicates the same relation between speech and character: "A man's character reveals itself in speech." From here the dictum made its way into Terence's play of the same name: "Quale ingenium haberes, fuit indicio oratio." Demetrius *On Style* says: "A letter should abound in glimpses of character. It may be said that everybody reveals his soul in his letters. . . . A letter is designed to be the heart's good wishes in brief." He also holds that there is some indication of a man's character in his jokes, in their playfulness or their license. He praises unadorned simplicity and might well have quoted the line of Aeschylus, "Simple, aye simple are the words of truth."

By far the most fruitful source of information touching the interplay of speech and character is the *Moral Epistles* of the younger Seneca. Epistle 75 treats of the *Diseases of the Soul*. "You have been complaining that my letters to you are rather carelessly written. Now, who talks carefully unless he also desires to talk affectedly? I prefer that my letters should be just what my conversation would be if you and I were sitting in one another's company and taking walks together,—spontaneous and easy; for my letters have nothing strained or artificial about them." The same letter contains this pointed dictum: "Let this be the kernel of my idea: let us say what we feel, and feel what we say; let speech harmonize with life. That man has fulfilled his promise who is the same person both when you see him and when

you hear him." This thought is harped upon in letter 115, on *Superficial Blessings*. There are two brief but striking utterances: "I wish you would not be too particular with regard to words and their arrangement. I have greater matters than these to commend to your care. You should see what to write, rather than how to write it. . . . Whenever you notice a style that is too careful and too polished, you may be sure that the mind is no less absorbed in petty things. The really great man speaks informally and easily; whatever he says, he speaks with assurance rather than with pains." Again, "Style is the garb of thought: if it be trimmed or dyed or treated, it shows that there are defects and flaws in the mind." It is Epistle 114, however, that should be the delight of the student of ancient style. It deals with *Style as a Mirror of Character*. "There is a saying," Seneca says, "which the Greeks have turned into a proverb; 'Man's speech is just like his life.' Exactly as each individual's actions seem to speak, so people's style of speaking often reproduces the general character of the time. . . . Wantonness in speech is proof of public effeminacy." Or take this passage on a people's way of living and the national style of writing: "Just as luxurious banquets and elaborate dress are indications of disease in the commonwealth, so an extravagance of style, if it be popular, shows that the mind (which is the source of the word) has lost its balance." A large portion of this letter derives its supreme interest from the intimate light it throws on Maecenas' personal habits and his style of speaking. Seneca severely criticises that same Maecenas whom every admirer of Horace has learned to venerate as the munificent patron that made the freedman's son the lyrical bard of Rome. It would be tempting to quote extracts from the Epistle, all bearing on Seneca's favorite thesis that style and life go hand in hand, but, within the limits of this paper, no amount of quotation could do justice to him. I prefer to invite the reader to see the epistle in full and judge for himself.

It is worthy of note that this theory of the connection between life and style, while fully exemplified in Seneca's own literary career, was yet not generally lived up to, in a very striking degree, by the writers of Greece or Rome. As for Seneca, many critics find in his character "something theatrical" ("iactare ingenium," as Tacitus puts it) which is reflected in his pointed aphorisms scattered over his epistles. In spite of his protestation "that my letters have nothing artificial about them," he was not content to express his feelings in a

simple, artless way, but displayed his wit with a great deal of rhetorical pathos. With regard to ancient writers in general, it has been observed that, with them, writing was an art consciously acquired, with the result that, broadly speaking, a writer, to be successful, had to subject his individuality to the all-powerful rules of rhetoric in force at the time. Ancient writers (and the same remark has been made about ancient artists) were able, within certain limits, to suppress the aspirations of their individual genius, in deference to the accepted standards of perfection. No doubt this repression of genius and individuality had much to do with the consummate art shown by the great masters of style. But it remains true that, for this very reason, the individual was less visible in ancient art than the current tendencies or traditions of each epoch. Ancient writers could successively compose in different styles, according as they chose to conform to one style rather than another. On this account critics no longer deny the Platonic authorship of the *Menexenus* or the Xenophontian authorship of the *Agesilaus* or the Tacitean authorship of the *Dialogus*, on the ground that the works named have peculiarities of style not prominent in the genuine productions of the writers. Critics have ceased to wonder how it was that Aristotle in his dialogues could write "so demoniacally."

We read and study the ancient writers in our schools and, in the more advanced classes at any rate, we try to form a mental picture of their character from the general tone of their style. We must, however, bear in mind the broad distinction between strictly individual style and the generally accepted style of the time. There is much in every writer of good standing which he owes to native genius; there is much, also, which he owes to pre-established standards not of his own making. Large allowances must be made for the latter; but when this tribute to time, type, and environment has been paid, the way is clear for an understanding of the author's idiosyncrasy, in accordance with Buffon's phrase or, if we prefer, with the verdict of Scripture: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

To return to Buffon. A quotation from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* may perhaps serve to rectify a prevalent error entertained in regard to the true meaning of that writer's famous phrase.

"This axiom is constantly misquoted ('le style c'est l'homme'), and not infrequently miscomprehended. It is usual to interpret it as meaning that the style of a writer is that writer's self, that it reveals the essence of his individuality. That is true, and the statement of it is useful. But it is probably not the meaning, or at least not the original meaning, that Buffon had in mind. It should be recollected that Buffon was a zoologist and that the phrase occurs in the course of his great *Natural History*. He was considering man in the abstract and differentiating him from other genera of the animal kingdom. Hence, no doubt, he remarked 'style was man himself.' He meant that style, in the variety and elaboration of it, distinguished the language of man, (*Homo sapiens*), from the monotonous roar of the lion and the

limited gamut of the bird. Buffon was engaged with biological, not with aesthetic ideas."

St. Louis, Mo.

JAMES A. KLEIST, S. J.

### "Rip Van Winkle" in Ancient Crete

The following charming legend is told by Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (Bk. I, Ch. 10):

"Epimenides was a native of Cnossus in Crete, though from wearing his hair long he did not look like a Cretan. One day he was sent into the country by his father to look for a stray sheep, and at noon he turned aside out of the way, and went to sleep in a cave, where he slept for fifty-seven years. After his long sleep he awoke and went in search of the sheep, thinking he had been asleep only a short time. When he could not find it, he came to the farm, and found everything changed and another owner in possession. Then he returned to the town in utter perplexity; and there, on entering his own house, he fell in with people who wanted to know who he was. At length he found his younger brother, now an old man, and learnt the truth from him. So he became famous throughout Greece, and was believed to be a special favorite of heaven."

Is there a possibility of our own "Rip Van Winkle" tracing his origin back to the days of classic Greece, a possibility of Rip claiming kinship with Epimenides, the shepherd lad of the Cretan hills?

You will readily agree that any writer of fiction acquainted with the story told by Diogenes would be tempted to make use of it. A comparison of "Rip Van Winkle" with "Epimenides" will show that in the fundamental ideas the stories are alike, though Irving's differs in development. From the Greek legend you get the impression that Epimenides was a young boy, while Rip is introduced to us as "an obedient, hen-pecked husband." If Irving was in possession of the story of Epimenides, why did he change the character of the hero? Did he perhaps, on one of his many excursions up the Hudson, come upon some roaming old Hollander who told him a sorrowful tale of domestic trouble? If so, Irving would not have hesitated to substitute the more pathetic character for the simple shepherd boy. The long-haired Epimenides might easily suggest so queer a personality as Rip.

The occasion for leaving home is different in each story. Epimenides was sent by his father in search of a stray sheep; Rip, on the other hand, was but indulging one of his accustomed rambles, to escape "from the labor of the farm and the clamor of his wife." The idea of the lost sheep would naturally undergo modifications as the tale came down through the ages; but if Irving did have this very legend in mind, he would not have found it necessary to alter this item in the story. Dame Van Winkle might very plausibly have ordered her husband to look for a sheep that had strayed from the farm through his carelessness.

As the story stands, Rip was just squirrel shooting when late in the afternoon, he lay down, wearied and

exhausted, on the green knoll. Our Greek hero went to sleep in a cave after spending the morning in futile search, and slept for fifty-seven years. At this point we must congratulate Irving for his originality. What could be more charming than to let the reader into the secrets of that long, enchanted sleep! Interest is tense and suspense heightened as we enjoy the sight of the fascinating little elves that people the Catskills, and of the goblins and ghosts of Hendrick Hudson and his crew playing nine-pins in the cave. We believe everything and hold our breath to hear what will happen next, when, lest interest should lag, Rip wakes up. Just as Epimenides went straight in search of his sheep, thinking he had been asleep but a short time, so Rip mumbles, "Surely I have not slept here all night," and presuming that the mountaineers have played a trick on him, pulls himself together and returns to the scene of his adventure.

The remainder of the story runs parallel with the classic legend. To both persons everything was changed. Rip finds his beard grown a foot long. Irving's care in noting the change in Rip's appearance adds greatly to our interest in the character, for ever after we think of Rip with his long gray beard. Epimenides found another man in possession of his father's farm; poor Rip found an empty and abandoned shack. "In utter perplexity," too, Rip returns to the town. The village inn was gone. A crowd gathered around the rickety, wooden building that replaced it and, centering their attention on poor Rip, puzzled him to distraction with their strange questionings. They pointed out *their* Rip Van Winkle. Ready at last to give up, he caught a familiar voice, that of his daughter with Rip-of-the-third-generation in her arms. Epimenides slept fifty-seven years, nearly three times as long as our own hero. As Epimenides was the favorite of heaven, so Rip was revered as one of the patriarchs of the village and a chronicle of the old times "before the war."

The Greek legend, as preserved by Diogenes, is a skeleton; the story of Rip Van Winkle is the skeleton built up, elaborated, endowed with a personality, living in the most bewitching and poetic of Nature's settings. It is the masterpiece of a genius, endearing itself more and more to the American people, by the charm of its local color and the old world lore immortalized.

While the possibility of Irving having read the story of Epimenides cannot be denied, little or nothing is available to prove that he was indebted to the older legend. His biographers are unanimous in the opinion that Greek, as well as Latin, was a closed book to him, his education having been completed through his extensive European travels and his association abroad with men of culture. However, Charles Dudley Warner in *American Men of Letters*, speaking of the customs of the time, says, ". . . what literary culture found expression was formed on English models dignified and plentifully garnished with Latin and Greek allusions." From this very general statement, I fear it would be stretching a point to infer that among the Greek allusions was one to Epimenides.

Another litterateur, John Macy, in his *Spirit of American Literature* and again in his *Story of the World's Literature*, tells us distinctly that Irving's tale was based on a German legend. He adds, "Irving has preserved the quality of a folk-tale and at the same time he permits himself the privilege of winking at the reader over the head of Knickerbocker." Does the "folk-tale" refer to Rip's experience with the mountain-elves which ever after corroborated the tradition, handed down by historians, that Hendrick Hudson kept vigil with his crew of the Half-Moon and so revisited the scenes and kept a guardian eye on the river and the great city? Or, does it refer to the very legend against which the author warns the reader, and with which he claims his tale has no connection, viz., the legend of Barbarossa who sleeps in the Kyffhäuserberg in Thuringia where he sits at a stone table with six of his companions, and "when his beard shall have wound itself thrice around the table, he will return and give Germany the foremost place among the nations"?

Warner, in the afore-mentioned work, styles "Rip Van Winkle" "a happy effort of imaginative humor—one of those strokes of genius that recreate the world and clothe it with unfading hues of romance; the theme was an old-world echo transformed by genius into a primal story that will endure as long as the Hudson flows through the mountains to the sea." Does the reference to the "old-world echo" imply that the Germans in their first fusions with classic Greece and Rome possibly snatched up some of the ancient legends and enriched with them their store of folk-tales? Does it imply that possibly Epimenides passed from Greek into German lore and with the early settlers came to the colonies where a bare remnant of the original reached the alert ears of Irving?

The consensus of literary opinion seems to dispel all conjecturing in its loud proclamation of Irving's imaginative power and originality as exemplified in Rip Van Winkle. Tren and Irkshire, in "Great American Writers" go so far as to say that ". . . even if Irving had written nothing but *Rip Van Winkle*, he would have had to his credit one of the few contributions to the literature of the entire world that any American has made." But, whether or not Epimenides is disguised as Rip Van Winkle, he is certainly a forerunner, and serves as another interesting proof that there is nothing new under the sun—but old ideas and old themes reset in more elaborate and modern casements, transfigured into charming, colorful fantasies through the illuminating eyes of those who are blessed with the gift of making others gay. Thus, regardless of Epimenides, the world of literature has twined her laurels about the brow of one such who enriched her realm with stories that have made the beautiful Catskills and the valley of the Hudson not only the home of romance but, for Americans, classic ground, and "his fresh voice of laughter still rings solitary along the Hudson palisades."

Cleveland, Ohio.

SISTER M. STANISLAUS, O. S. U.



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There has become rather widespread of late what seems to us a misconception of the value of medieval Latin as a college subject for classical students. Byzantine Greek and late Latin are, indeed, most worthy subjects of study in university courses on Christian Origins, Medieval Civilization, etc., but they are not so well adapted for college work leading to a classical degree. Whatever may be said about the intrinsic excellence of the works of late Greek and Latin writers, they *do* not, *have* not, and *will* not hereafter hold the place in the literature of the world which is occupied by the great writers of classical antiquity; and it is precisely because the latter hold such a place in world literature, that their study has been made an integral part of the traditional curriculum of liberal arts. The works of post-classical Greek and Latin writers have not the same value as the works of the classical writers, when viewed as instruments of liberal culture, because they are less perfect in form, and hence less suited to develop literary taste in the young, and because, both in thought-content and in form of expression, they approximate to our own modern literature; whereas the very differences of classical idiom from our own, and of the ancient viewpoint from the modern, make the classical literatures of Greece and Rome, altogether apart from their intrinsic perfection, so excellent an instrument for mental development.

The importance given to the study of late Latin in this country in recent years is partly the result of the modern scientific spirit, which tends to emphasize the historical viewpoint in all studies, with special stress on the genesis, evolution and complete development of the

subjects which it investigates. Partly, too, it is due to the large number of workers in the field of the classics, who, eager for new conquests, have pressed more and more into the byways of Greek and Roman literature. A further reason is the prevalent heresy that to have done some original research work is an essential qualification for efficient teaching of the classics; and original research work naturally carries the young aspirant to the doctorate into unexplored corners of his field of study.

The unfortunate part of the situation is that, given the American high school and college as they are today, an adequate foundation for the pursuit of such research work in the classics is not provided in the ordinary courses leading to the bachelor's degree. Four units of high-school Latin and from twenty to forty semester hours of college Latin are, as experience proves, totally insufficient to impart that full liberal culture which the classics are capable of giving. In Germany the nine years of the *Gymnasium*, and in England the six to eight years of classics in the secondary school, plus three or four years devoted almost exclusively to the classics in the A. B. course at the university, still achieve the rare product of a liberal education. For, be it remembered, the classics are taught in high school and college, *not* to give students a full and complete knowledge of Greek and Roman literature from their beginnings up to their latest developments,—that were neither a possible nor a desirable objective to aim at,—but because the study of the Greek and Latin languages in their *classical* form, and the content of Greek and Roman literature in their *classical* periods, constituting as they do a high-water mark of human achievement, provide an excellent discipline for the mind, the imagination, the taste, and the emotions, and furnish a solid background for the study of modern ideas, and modern literary, artistic, political, and social forms, which are so largely derived from Greece and Rome. Since, then, the very purpose of the classics in education is fulfilled, and adequately fulfilled, by a study of the classical writers of Greece and Rome, and since a thorough appreciation of those classical writers is a matter not of thirty or forty semester hours of Latin, but of several years of almost complete absorption in them, does it not seem a perversion of the very end of a classical education to direct young students to Byzantine and medieval writers, when they have as yet only dipped into Xenophon, Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, Euripides, and Sophocles in Greek, and Caesar, Cicero, Vergil, Horace, Livy and Tacitus in Latin, without even a smattering perhaps of some of the greatest lights of antiquity, of an Aeschylus, Pindar, Thucydides, Herodotus, Aristophanes, Aristotle, of a Plautus, Terence, Lucretius, Sallust, Juvenal, Catullus, Martial, etc.?

The subject matter of that classical training which constitutes the soul of a liberal education is not *Latin* and *Greek*—that, in the modern view, would include the entire field, classical and non-classical—but *classical*

*Latin and Greek.* So thoroughly is this principle recognized in England, that amongst about seventy-five different courses offered during one scholastic year to classical students (doing a three to four years A.B. course exclusively in the classics) at the University of Cambridge, not a single course goes beyond the Alexandrian period in Greek, or the Silver Age in Latin literature. And the reason for this practice at Cambridge is not that the Patristic and medieval writers are regarded as undeserving of study, (they *are* studied in history, archaeology, scripture and other courses), but because they are in a field distinct from a classical liberal arts course, and because three to four years of concentration on classical literature is deemed only just enough, if one would reap the best fruits of a classical education.

### Books Received

From Silver, Burdett and Co., New York:

*Classical Myths That Live Today.* By Frances E. Sabin. Pp. xxv and 348. 1927.

*Narrationes Biblicae, from the Vulgate.* By Abram Lipsky and Harry E. Wedeck. Pp. 80. \$68. 1928.

*Latin—First Year.* By Ralph Van Deman Magoffin and Margaret Young Henry. With a Latin Playlet by Lillian B. Lawler. Pp. 446. 132 illus. \$1.48. 1928.

From Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.:

*Selections from the Elegiac, Iambic, and Lyric Poets.* For the use of students in Harvard University. 1928.

From the Macmillan Company, New York:

*The Catholic Church and the Bible,* By Rev. Hugh Pope, O. P. (*The Calvert Series*). Pp. 106. 1928. \$1.00.

*Palladii Dialogus de Vita S. Ioannis Chrysostomi.* Edited with Revised Text, Introduction, Notes, Indices, and Appendices. By P. R. Coleman-Norton. Pp. lxxxvii and 230. 1928.

**Palladii Dialogus De Vita S. Ioannis Chrysostomi.**

By P. R. Coleman-Norton, A. M. (Prin.), D. Phil. (Oxon). Pp. xc and 230. Cambridge University Press.

The author of this doctoral thesis on *Palladius' Dialogue*, accepted by the University of Oxford for the degree of D. Phil., is a Rhodes scholar, a fellow in Classics of Princeton and at present Assistant Professor of Classics in this latter University. The work consists of Introduction, Revised Text, Notes, Indices, and Appendices. The introduction is a full-dress report on all matters of importance bearing on Palladius and his writings: the *Dialogue* and the *Historia Lausiaca*. One cannot but admire its width of compass and accuracy of detail. On the date and authorship of the *Dialogue* the author is most satisfying.

To me this scholarly work is interesting as challenging comparison with the well-known Deferrari Series of Pa-

tristic Studies published by the Catholic University of America. The contributors to this series accompany their texts with an English translation on the opposite page. They also supply admirable sketches of vocabulary, syntax and style of each of the Fathers studied, all matters which Mr. Coleman-Norton has excluded from his research. His Notes likewise are mostly historical and critical, to the neglect of exegesis and grammatical issue. Personally I would give the preference to the method pursued and indeed already standardized in the Deferrari Series.

The author would probably excuse the omissions mentioned on the ground that there exist manuals on post-classical grammar in general; but it may be urged that each post-classical writer has peculiarities of his own. As regards translation, the author may refer the reader to the Translation by Clarke (S. P. C. K., London) as being adequate for his needs. But in this again I feel that the Deferrari method has the advantage.

D. K.

**Greek Rhetoric and Literary Criticism.** By W. Rhys Roberts, Litt. D. (*Our Debt to Greece and Rome*. 53). Longmans, Green and Co. Pp. 164. 1928. \$1.75.

In this volume, in which Dr. Roberts treats a subject familiar to him from a long series of publications, the Greek masters of Rhetoric and Literary Criticism pass in review: Plato and Aristophanes, Aristotle and Demetrius "On Style," Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Longinus "On the Sublime," and a host of minor critics and rhetoricians. A final chapter deals with the lasting impression which Greek Rhetoric has made on Rome and is making to this day on speaking, writing, and the art of appraising literature.

While each writer named in this manual finds a sympathetic, though discriminating, judge, Dr. Roberts lingers with preference over two great figures, Plato and Aristotle, Plato the sublime, and Aristotle the reasoner.

Plato was a paradox even to his contemporaries. He condemned the rhetorical spirit rampant in his day. To him sophist and rhetorician were the same thing. With lofty detachment he set the claims of truth and justice over against the arts of rhetorical persuasion. To him the fine language of Gorgias was no guide to truth. His was a deep-seated distrust of artistic beauty, and not only poetry, including Homer, but painting, sculpture, music, and architecture had short shrift from him. And yet this same Plato was a consummate artist: he remains among the greatest of all authors. "And one of the chief debts owed by literary criticism to him . . . is that, through the standing paradox presented by his own practice and theory, he teaches men to value but not to overvalue literature." Aristotle, the reasoner, was bound to depart from his teacher: he held that rhetoric must not be proscribed on the ground that it may be abused. The great thing is "to have justice and truth on your side, and to support them with the weapon of rational speech."

*Graecia docet* was a phrase coined by a man who was heavily indebted to Greece. Cicero's dictum is true to this day. "Pure Greek suggests an ideal of Pure English for the great 'Common Dialect' of the modern English-speaking world. And for every student of the ancient Greek world, the theory and practice of Greek speaking and writing, as viewed by the Greeks themselves, must always have a special interest and value."

J. A. K.

**Three Private Speeches of Demosthenes.** Edited with Notes by F. C. Doherty. Pp. 111. Oxford University Press, American Branch, New York, 1927, \$1.25.

Not many of the private speeches of Demosthenes are available in annotated editions in English. Hence we heartily welcome Mr. Doherty's excellent edition of the πρὸς Φορμίωνα, a speech relating to bottomry, or a loan upon a merchantman and its cargo, the πρὸς Βοιωτὸν ἄ, which deals with an interesting case of a legal change of name, and the Κατὰ Κόνωνα, a very clever and enlightening little speech, involving a case of assault and battery and throwing much light on the social and military life of the fourth century Athenian. There is an adequate introduction to each speech, a summary of the argument, and sufficient and satisfying notes dealing mainly with the subject matter of the text. For those whose acquaintance with Demosthenes is confined to the public orations, this little volume will furnish an excellent introduction to the broader field of his private legal speeches, which constitute a store-house of information on the social and economic life of Athens of his day. The use of somewhat larger type for the Greek text would greatly improve this edition, especially from the point of view of American students.

F. A. P.

**Greek Lyric Poets.** Selections from the Elegiac, Iambic, and Lyric Poets. For the use of Students in Harvard University. Harvard U. Press. 1928.

This convenient edition of Selections from the Greek lyric poets offers 54 pages of Greek text, with no comment, vocabulary or introduction. The authors drawn upon are Callinus, Tyrtaeus, Mimnermus, Solon, Phocylides, Demodocus, Xenophanes, Theognis, Archilochus, Semonides of Amorgos, Hipponax, Aleman, Alcaeus, Sappho (30 pieces), Stesichorus, Ibycus, Anacreon, Simonides, Pindar, Bacchylides, Hybrias, Popular Poetry, Seolia, Aeschylus, Ion, Simmias, Plato, Speusippus, (Demosthenes), Anaereontics (15 selections),—a neat selection of Greek lyric poetry for one semester. K.

Greek is not a quack specific. It can be badly taught and badly learned. It can be so handled (as all the best things can) that it becomes useless or worse than useless. But, even after all allowance is made for this, it is a gate opening into an enlarged and ennobled life. Education without Greek may be, and often is, very good; but with Greek it is better. (Mackail).

### Transfer From the Classics to the Vernacular

Franklin P. Adams used to give a paragraph in his column in the *New York World* to the blunders in grammar and usage which he came across in the newspapers and books of the week. The accuracy with which he classified men and magazines by their sins against the vernacular, opened one's eyes to what he thought of these things as criteria of polish and intelligence. Whether or not you agreed with his marking of the intelligence quotient of the *Saturday Evening Post*, and a few popular novelists, because of pleonasm in the first instance and continued misuse of the relative in the other, you were forced to observe that there are a number of mistakes in English which half-educated people make frequently, educated people less frequently, and a number of constructions where the ear has become an inaccurate judge and a scientific knowledge of grammar is necessary.

I had been away from Latin and Greek for a year or so, when my attention was directed to this, and I was able to profit by some of Adams' distinctions and to avoid like inaccuracies thereafter by recalling my Latin and Greek syntax. I made the discovery that all I knew about English usage in a scientific way, I had learned from the classics. This is probably the experience of most of us. If we know anything about English in an ordered form, it is because we have connected it here and there with our Latin grammar.

But these connections are too few, as many of us begin to realize after we leave school. It strikes us as unfortunate and a bit odd, too, that we should have mastered with great effort a highly scientific terminology, and have forced our minds into a grammatical way of thinking without learning more about our native tongue in the process. The first end of Latin grammar, of course, is facility in reading. But an important secondary end, one which justifies the proportionate time given to the classics, is increased ability in handling the vernacular. It is expected that concentration upon the syntax and idiom of Latin and Greek will result in a corresponding care in English. Some transfer of this kind evidently does take place; but there is a feeling abroad that it is sometimes less than we have reason to expect. How can the efficiency of this transfer be increased?

Recent tests by educational psychologists on the question of the transfer of knowledge from one sphere of thought to another, have brought out the interesting fact that the operation is not automatic. It is not enough, they say, that the discipline to which the student is subjected should train him in processes that are applicable to many other kinds of mental work. Unless his attention is called to these applications, the transference rarely takes place. For instance, a student can learn that the relative in Latin is governed by the verb of the clause in which it stands, and yet constantly write, "he was at a loss to know who he could get"; he can know when to separate a Latin adjective from its noun, and still say, "to really understand"; he can be taught to observe how careful Plato is to use common words, and



how careful Tacitus is to use few words, and yet write wordy and stilted English. The habits of grammatical exactness, which training in Latin syntax produces, and the knowledge of correct principles of style obtained by contact with the great writers of antiquity, can be acquired for Latin and Greek only, with no carry-over into English. And this sometimes happens, as we know. Indeed the residue of many years of classical study is, too frequently, a store of awkward Latinisms, instead of a firm grip on the idiom of the mother tongue, which continued comparison of one language with another ought to produce.

If, then, we accept the opinion of the psychologists, we must conclude that transfer of knowledge from Latin to English is a process separate and distinct from the operation of learning Latin, and that the existence of identical elements in the two is not in itself sufficient to effect the transfer. The teacher must indicate the points where Latin and English are alike, and where they are different, so that the process of carrying over the classical experience to the vernacular may begin to operate. The conclusion, too, that transfer is a separate process demands that this be done, not once but continually, until the student learns to do it automatically.

This, of course, supposes a knowledge, on the part of the teacher, of the common ground between Latin and English. One of the best treatises on this subject, and a new one, is *Modern English Usage*, by H. W. Fowler, Clarendon Press, 1926. The book combines a thorough familiarity with Latin and Greek with a wide knowledge of modern English. Fowler seems to be one of those rare personalities, possessed of great classical lore, who, like Addison, Macaulay, Arnold, and a few others, have succeeded in effecting a happy mixture of the racy present with the respectable past. His Latin and Greek are living elements because they are everywhere criticising, modifying, directing the vital vernacular.

In his treatment of a purely grammatical subject like the placing of the preposition at the end of the sentence, he begins by showing how Dryden and Gibbon made the mistake of inferring that because in Latin prose it was not proper to place the preposition later than its word, it is inelegant in English to end a sentence with a preposition. He then quotes Ruskin, Bacon, DeQuincey, and others to show that the late preposition is an incurable English instinct and quite idiomatic. Finally quotations are given from newspapers to show how the Dryden-Gibbon tradition has remained in existence, and how because of it "even now immense pains are daily expended in changing spontaneous into artificial English." Transfer from English to Latin is not always on the basis of identical elements, and this is a good example of how undirected classical study can do more harm than good to one's English style.

An example of direct transfer is given under *Formal Words*, where the author refers to the Greek theory of the  $\chi\upsilon\iota\alpha \delta\acute{\nu}\omicron\upsilon\alpha\tau\alpha$ , or *dominantia verba*, as Horace calls them, and he points out how the neglect of this

principle in English is responsible for much hazy prose. "Few things," he observes, "contribute more to vigor of style than the realization that the dominant or common names are better than formal words." This theory is further developed under such captions as *Love of the Long Word*, *Fetishes*, *Long Variants*, *Literary Critics' Words*, etc.

The study of Tacitus' compact Latin is well supplemented by the articles on *Compound Prepositions*, *Periphrasis*, and *Pleonasm*, in which some of the things that reduce the vigor of prose and make for flabby English are pointed out. The question of the quantity of vowels in English as opposed to the Latin practice, the accent of words coming from the classical tongues, the passing of the subjunctive in English, whether or not Anglo-Saxon words are to be preferred to those of Latin origin, are some of the other subjects handled.

One cannot read many articles in this very unusual dictionary without getting into the habit of carrying over one's classical experience to one's reading of newspapers and magazines. As an example of one-hundred per cent transfer of knowledge, it is a splendid model for both teacher and student. The thrill that comes from being able to laugh at newspaper usage with Pliny as an authority, is an experience that ought to come more than once in a lifetime to present-day students of the classics, and will come if more attention is paid to the transfer of experience from the classics to the mother tongue, as this book so encouragingly proves.

St. Louis, Mo.

CALVERT ALEXANDER, S. J.

### A Silent Drama in Latin Words

PLACE: A Latin classroom.

TIME: Ten or fifteen minutes before the opening of classes on any class day.

CAST OF CHARACTERS: A goodly number of pupils of a first-year Latin class.

PROPERTIES: Three sheets of white Bristol Board (the reverse side of strips of light wall paper will do almost as well). Three sets of rubber type with letters an inch high, each letter mounted on a small wooden block, and an ink-pad (both obtainable in ten-cent stores). A bottle of library paste, a pencil, a pair of scissors.

WORDS: Nothing said.

ACTION: At one of the sheets of Bristol Board (we will call them charts) a boy who has just printed *acer, acris, acre, —acrid; cor, cordis, —cordial; cordate; felix, felicitis, —felicitous*, is now, with a pencil, writing his name in small letters after each of the English derivations he has printed. At the second chart another student has printed *dramatis personae, —drama, person (the cast of the play)* and is now finishing the printing of *exeunt omnes, —exit; omnibus (all leave the stage)*.

At the third chart a third pupil has already posted an advertisement for *terra cotta*,

clipped from a magazine and printed beneath it *terra cotta*, (baked clay). His companion is now posting a label from a can of fruit which bears the words "*qualitas quam quantitas*," below which he will write "*quality rather than quantity*." Other pupils are waiting their turns at the various charts.

What is the purpose of this strange silent drama? It is only a little device that I found helpful in creating greater interest in Latin, that supplied the extra work needed by some of the brighter pupils, and that helped me to teach my class the relation of English to Latin by means of derivatives, and this with the use of but very few minutes of class time.

Each day in reading over the words of the new vocabulary the pupils themselves pointed out the obvious English derivatives. On the following day anyone who had discovered a derivative of a word in our vocabulary which the class had not thought of on the preceding day, printed it on the derivative chart, wrote his name after it, and received one per cent additional on his recitation grade for that day. At the beginning of the class we glanced over the new words that had been added that day. The fact that we did so and that the list always remained in a conspicuous place in the classroom helped to impress upon the minds of the pupils not only these additional derivatives but also the Latin word and its meaning. Moreover it was a kind of official recognition for work done by pupils on their own initiative.

On the second chart the pupils printed Latin expressions met with in their other classes or in their assigned reading, receiving for each such expression printed and translated a reward of two per cent.

The third chart was very colorful and had to be replaced by a fresh one several times. Here were pictures of public buildings with Latin inscriptions, labels with Latin trade names or expressions, advertisements for "Lux" soap, "Ne plus ultra" safety pins, etc. Two per cent added to the daily recitation grade here again was the reward.

Lest any one think that the rewards given were too generous, it may be well here to show how little the rewards won by my pupils actually affected their general averages. Since they had to hand in written exercises almost daily, had frequent little written reviews, and monthly underwent a test of the matter covered during the month just elapsed, and since the grades received in these exercises counted more than the daily recitations in making up the monthly average, a pupil to raise his grade one per cent had to print at least sixty derivatives or the equivalent on the other charts, an amount of work that only the very brightest could do.

The class enjoyed this device thoroughly, and all, from best to poorest, brought in their contributions so generously that at the end of the year we had a very interesting set of charts. Moreover the class had gained a good knowledge of the debt of the English language to the Latin, had acquired facility in discovering derivatives, and had found Latin a very entertaining and

practical subject. Best of all, these results were gained in spite of the fact that I had saved practically the whole class period for the more essential work of the first-year Latin course.

St. Louis, Mo.

W. R. O'DONNELL, S. J.

### Question Box

Juvenal in his satires seems to make the appearance of a Roman noble in the arena a crime deserving of greater censure than certain unspeakable depravities which he mentions in almost the same breath. He seems to place the erudite woman on a footing with the adulteress and the poisoner. Again, he classes as the greatest of the crimes of Nero the fact that he wrote a poem on the Fall of Troy. Would you consider this seeming lack of judgment grim humour, an anti-climax for rhetorical effect, or a sincere conviction of the poet, arising from national prejudice?

H. W. L.

Juvenal undoubtedly shows a tendency to make his own the Stoic tenet, castigated by Horace in *Satires* I, 3, that all sins are equally blameworthy. Yet the lack of order he habitually manifests in his poems should make us slow to conclude that, just because he indiscriminately mingles in his invective crimes like murder and adultery with mere social improprieties, he really considered the latter of equal gravity with the former. Indignation often knows no fine distinctions. Some of the juxtapositions in question are doubtless excellent examples of the grim humor and rhetorical power which constitute the very soul of Juvenal's satire. It must be remembered, too, that today as in the days of Juvenal, flagrant violations of propriety by persons in high places often cause more horror and evoke more severe criticism on the part of men of the world, than serious lapses from the moral law. And in a country where social castes were as deeply entrenched as in imperial Rome, the spectacle of an emperor or a noble turning actor, gladiator or buffoon, would naturally create no little stir.

F. A. P.

### Herculaneum

Excavations steadily continue at Herculaneum. During the last four months the workmen have been busy removing lava from a height of fourteen meters, and some 6,000 cubic yards of earth have been carted to the sea. Two houses, one of fourteen rooms, and the other with an atrium and two broad stairways, have been brought to light. The excavations near one of these houses have resulted in a remarkable group of interesting finds. These include many statuettes of exquisite workmanship, terra-cotta vases and bronze kitchen utensils, large unguent bottles, and several pieces of carbonized bread and chicken with some beans. In a report on these finds, Prof Majuri states that the building uncovered at Herculaneum is of the Hellenistic epoch, the first of the kind found at Herculaneum. The building has two wings in the shape of the letter U, and the entire first floor of seven rooms has been fully explored. (*Fortnightly Review*, Vol. XXXV, No. 16.)



